wish the Prime Minister had not referred to it because then one would have to go into the details as to what had happened, whether it was brought in parts or it was after the elections and so on. If this is the thing, then comes the question of Common Civil Code. That will be a better analogy. But I do appreciate his efforts and I do agree that social change does create some difficulties. If he wants time, we welcome it. I again express my appreciation for his sentiments.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think when the Prime Minister referred to it, he was referring to the past. It was not for the future. He has only referred to the past example and how unhappiness and some misgivings we could overcome. That is what he has referred to, not what we would do in the future.

THE BROADCASTING BILL, 1997

MOTION FOR REFERENCE OF BILL TO JOINT COMMITTEE—CONTD.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Just now the House cleared certain names for a Joint Committee on Shri Jaipal Reddy's Bill. Two names have to be changed on the request of Shri Pranab Mukherjee.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): I have no objection.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Minister has no objection. I will read out the names so that it can come on record. Shri Ahmed Patel and Shri Krishna Kumar Birla will be replacing Shri Janardhana Poojary and Dr. Shrikant Jichkar.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Ninth Summit of SAARC at Male

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Madam, I have the honour to present before the House a Suo Motu Statement on my participation in the 9th Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation which was held in Male from May 12-14, 1997.

Cooperation amongst the 7 Member State of SAARC has been increasing in recent years and the Summit further exemplified the strength of the Association.

For the information of Honourable Members I would like to summarise the principal developments at the Summit.

An earlier decision of SAARC was to work for a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) preferably by the year 2000 but in any case before 2005 AD. The 9th Summit has now agreed that SAFTA should be realised by the year 2001, thus advancing the final target year by four years. This is an important decision which reflects the growing sentiment among member countries to consolidate economic interaction speedily.

another significant step was the decision to set up a Group of Eminent persons in order to develop a long range vision for SAARC. There was general agreement amongst and the Head that SAARC was now in a position to strengthen its activity in core economic sectors, for which an agenda should be developed.

The question of sub-regional cooperation in South Asia came up. Prior to the Summit, some differences of view had been expressed on the appropriate relationship between sub-regional cooperation and the regional structure of SAARC. Whereas our preference from the start was that projects for sub-regional cooperation should be developed within SAARC, as specifically provided for under Article 7 of the Charter, some other countries had initially felt that it was better to keep sub-regional efforts outside SAARC. Happily, the issue was resolved to the complete satisfaction of all parties by agreeing that specific projects for sub-regional cooperation would be developed and processed through the Secretariat and endorsed inter-governmentally through